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NEWS AND COMMENTS

Of late the editor has been reflecting on the prevalence of a type of historical writing that, until he can illustrate his meaning, he will term applied history. The tendency in exaggerated form appears in the work of newspaper exponents of the new civics who gravely rebuke the professional historians because they have suffered to lie hidden the fact that malaria was the downfall of the Roman Empire; in another aspect it appears in articles by Celtic enthusiasts who derive the federal constitution of the United States from the federation of the ancient Irish kingdoms. It must however be confessed that the development of a popular belief that such are the proper uses and such the legitimate ends of historical study is the work — often we admit unconscious — of certain laborers in the fields of social sciences. Such scientists, in urging the alteration of existing social or political institutions, have too often referred with an air of finality to the supposed lessons of certain isolated parts of past history. More than that a few of them have openly avowed and many more in their manner of writing history have implied, that the key to human history is to be found in some single principle — in economic environment, or in psychological analysis of the heroes of the past. Only recently the historical journal of a religious denomination has announced as its mission the interpretation of history in the light of its theology. For excuse it has alleged that since the materialist interpretation of the past is already a conscious and potent force in shaping the institutions of the future, the theological interpretation also has the right to be heard for its cause. In short there seems to be a real danger that students will no longer think it worth while to strive to see a historical situation as a whole, and that history will be written more and more from half a dozen different viewpoints with the adherents of each rejecting as unimportant all evidence of the existence of other factors than that under which they have enrolled themselves.

The genuine historical student can regard the advent of such a condition only as a calamity. Of course he will be bidden to console himself with the thought that men never have written of the past without seeing it as distorted through their prejudices. He will be reminded that the faith of the Prussian school in the great destiny of the German race was as much inspired by a vision of the future as by a dispassionate study of the past, and that *la ravanche* was the motive that led Fustel de Cou-

langes to emphasize anew the permanence of the Roman contribution to European civilization. Yet the trained historian of the present in spite of such evidence is conscious that in approaching the past he endeavors to strip himself of all preconceptions and prejudices inherent or acquired. He is conscious also that he strives ever to see the past as the work of various factors and motives and personalities, ideal and material, noble and sordid alike. And while the shortness of time and the vastness of the material to be mastered sometimes compels him to separate a single factor from the rest, he tries never to forget that in studying it apart he is merely preparing for a complete reconstruction of the whole in which each factor shall bear its proper relation to the rest. In this attitude, and not in the opposition one to the other of a dozen half truths does he place his faith in some day being able to reveal the whole truth of history. Inspired by this faith he feels that the exemplification of the past may safely be entrusted to him by the adherents of any and every creed, race, and political persuasion.

The July number of the *American historical review* contains comparatively little of interest in the field of western history. The exceptions are in the notes and documents. The observations of Superintendent John Stuart and Governor James Grant of East Florida on the proposed plan of 1764 for the future management of Indian affairs are contributed with an introduction by C. E. Carter. Katherine B. Judson supplies a letter written to the Hudson's Bay company by the Mormon settlers at Salt lake in 1847; it is a request to the Hudson's Bay company to establish a trading post at Salt lake. The leading articles in the *Review* are: W. L. Westermann, "The economic basis of the decline of ancient culture"; G. B. Adams, "Magna carta and the responsible ministry"; C. M. Andrews, "Anglo-French commercial rivalry, 1700-1750: the western phase"; W. S. Robertson, "The United States and Spain, 1822"; and F. E. Golder, "The Russian fleet and the civil war." The notes and suggestions contain an interesting addition by Burr to his remarks for the establishment of the date at which men first spoke of the "Middle Ages." In passing the editor may remark that an overzealous proof reader who took it on himself to alter "discrete" to "discreet" changed completely the meaning of the note on the *Review* in our last number.

The second number of the *Catholic historical review* appeared in July, 1915. This magazine is devoted to the publication of material for the study of the Catholic church history of the United States. The articles in this number discuss the church in Connecticut and missionary work in the present state of Maine. There is also a paper on the church in Cuba. The second instalment of the introduction on bibliography appearing in

the magazine takes up the question of the use of the historical method in ecclesiastical history.

The *Magazine of history* for February, 1915, is an unusually interesting number. Among materials of especial interest to the West are a note on the Lincoln genealogy, and a letter of Lincoln of April 6, 1860, in which he estimates the relative strength in northern and southern Illinois of the various candidates for the republican presidential nomination. There is a kind of melancholy interest in a typical Adams paper on the Trent affair by the late Charles Francis Adams.

In the January number of the same magazine the most striking item is an attribution of the word "Dixie" to the French "Dix" on the back of the ten dollar note of the Citizen's Bank of Louisiana. Whatever one may think of the derivation, the color reproduction of the note is a beautiful piece of printing, and one wishes that Mr. William Beer had enlarged even more on the interesting topic of the work of the Louisiana banks under the act of 1842 in establishing a stable note currency in the Southwest. In its own field of "Desiderata curiosa" in American history, the *Magazine of history* becomes, month by month, more competent.

The *History teacher's magazine* for June, 1915, contains the following articles: "Realizable educational values in history," by C. O. Davis; "The last twelve years of British diplomacy," by M. W. Tyler; and "Making high school history teaching definite," by D. C. Knowlton. There is an interesting study by Harriet Sheap on the construction of a little historical museum of pioneer life in an Illinois town. William K. Boyd contributes a short study on the place of local history in the college curriculum, with special reference to successful work at Trinity College, North Carolina.

The Smithsonian Institute has issued a list of publications of the bureau of American ethnology with index to authors and titles.

Bulletin 46 of the bureau of American ethnology is a dictionary of the Choctaw language, compiled over a century ago by the missionary, Cyrus Byington.

The *American economic review* for June contains a list of doctoral dissertations in progress in the fields of political economy. The leading article is Willard C. Fisher's "The field of workmen's compensation in the United States."

The *Pennsylvania magazine of history and biography* for April has an article by Amandus Johnson on John Classon Rising, last director of New Sweden. The magazine also prints the journal of Captain John Fer-

dinand Daziel Smyth, loyalist, recounting his adventures and misfortunes in the middle states in 1776-1777. Among other documents is a journal kept in 1758 by the commandant of a frontier fort. One or two papers relating to William Penn and to his estate are also printed. There is also a list of marriage licenses from 1742 to 1748. The July number is devoted to the publication of material for a biography of Mrs. Elizabeth Fergusson, née Graeme. The material consists of letters to Mrs. Fergusson dated from 1757 to 1795. The other source material published is a continuation of the list of Pennsylvania marriage licenses, 1742-1748, and extracts from the diary of Thomas Franklin Pleasants, 1814. The latter is devoted chiefly to the local militia organized for the defense of Philadelphia.

The *Virginia magazine of history and biography* for July, 1915, is devoted almost exclusively to the publication of archive material, consisting of "Acts, orders and resolutions of the general assembly of Virginia," 1643-1646; "Minutes of the council and general court, 1622-1629"; "Abstracts of lists of wills and administrations from British probate courts"; and "abstracts by W. N. Sainsbury, and copies in the McDonald and De Jarnette papers in the Virginia State Library" entitled "Virginia in 1677-1678."

Richmond College presents under date of June, 1915, volume 1, number 1, of the *Richmond College historical papers*. The publication is the result of a healthy undergraduate interest in research which inspired the class of 1913 to pledge a fund for publishing documents and college essays relating to Virginia history. It is hoped that further endowments will make it possible to continue the publication as a "Richmond College historical magazine." The number of the *Papers* before us contains the letters to Edmund Pendleton, president of the Virginia convention, from William Woodford, Colonel Robert Howe, and General Charles Lee, successively commanders against Lord Dunmore in 1775 and 1776. The essays in the number are biographies of John M. Botts, Richard Henry Lee, William C. Rives, and John Moncure Daniel. They are all very respectable undergraduate work, good enough, in fact, to make the average university instructor envious. The enterprise from every point of view seems well advised. The fact that Dice R. Anderson, head of the history department in Richmond College, is editor will insure the undergraduate essays being kept in a modest sphere in which they can be of value to the more mature historian. On the other hand, the poise and scholarly self-reliance that participation in such a publication can give to students is priceless. Not a great university in the country but might profitably engage in a similar enterprise.

The *Proceedings* of the fifteenth annual session of the State Library and Historical Association of North Carolina, held at Raleigh, December 1-2, 1914, contains a series of addresses of considerable interest. Among them may be noted "The new north state," by Archibald Henderson; "Some Argentine ideas," by R. S. Naon, Argentine ambassador to the United States; and "The North Carolina historians," by Stephen B. Weeks. A conference on county history is reported by Archibald Henderson.

The most important article in the January *South Carolina historical and genealogical magazine* is Henry A. M. Smith's "Old Charles Town and its vicinity." There is also a reprint of the "Parish register of St. James', Santee" for 1769-1771 and a regimental list of the Second South Carolina continental regiment of foot, compiled by John Bennett, who provides an interesting introduction on barrack life in 1777.

The quarterly publication of the *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* for January and April, 1914, contains a reprint of papers, abstracts of testimony, etc., prepared for the trial of Blennerhassett in Ohio. This material is edited by Lesley Henshaw of the University of Cincinnati. He believes that a part of the documents at least have never been used by students, but he points out that they contribute only to the verification of minor points. The pamphlet is illustrated with two facsimiles, one of a cipher letter from Aaron Burr and the other of the cipher itself.

The *Year book* of the Sandusky County Pioneer and Historical Association for 1914 contains a variety of material, the most prominent part of which consists of the *Proceedings* of the association's annual meeting and obituaries of deceased pioneers.

The noteworthy things in the *Indiana magazine of history* for June are three reminiscences: two by D. S. Whitenack and Henry Devillez of experiences in Andersonville prison, and one by a late river pilot, Wilson Daniels, on steamboating on the Ohio and Mississippi before the war. In the latter, especially, the local color is thick and varied, though apparently the document was not written until long after the events recounted. Walter J. Wakefield contributes an article on "County seminaries in Indiana."

Within the past week the managing editor with regret has seen the departure of the Kaskaskia manuscripts, loaned to the Illinois State Historical Library ten years ago. These papers, mainly records of the French notaries in the Illinois country for the period 1720-1800, were legally the property of Randolph county, Illinois, and at the request of

the circuit clerk of that county they have been returned to his custody. Whatever one may think of the law, now nearly a hundred years old, that transferred these papers from the custody of the secretary of state to that of the circuit clerk of Randolph county, there is no doubt that records should remain where the law prescribes. One may at least venture a private opinion that the law should be otherwise. Like many papers far less valuable, these were in process of disintegration through neglect in a county office where they were obtained by the editor as agent for the library. They have now been carefully mounted and inclosed in portfolios in a manner that insures their preservation for many years to come if only ordinary care is given them; and care to that extent at least the editor believes they will now receive in their former abiding place.

"State documents for libraries" is the title of a University of Illinois *Bulletin*, issued by Ernest J. Reece. It is a general consideration of the origin and function of the American state with special reference to a logical classification of state public documents. There are various comprehensive brief bibliographies of certain types of state documents: statutes, blue books, and document lists of one sort or another. While the classification has special reference to the needs of the librarian, the ordinary student of political science will find several of the bibliographies of great value.

The Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society held its forty-first annual meeting June 2-3. Perhaps the most generally significant part of its work was a conference led by William L. Jenks on "Methods of coöperation on the part of public libraries, patriotic societies and county historical societies with the Michigan Historical Commission in gathering and publishing materials relating to the history of the state."

"Historical sketches of the Ninth Michigan infantry" by Charles W. Bennett, Henry C. Rankin, and Frank A. Lester, Jr., is a publication intended for veterans of the regiment. It contains accounts of the regimental meetings since the war and of regimental and company organizations. The main part of the book, however, is a chronicle of the command's battles and campaigns. Most of this last is apparently based on reminiscences, but extracts from contemporary letters are given and apparently are carefully quoted. There are many illustrations, some of them interesting war-time photographs of places and objects.

The *Wisconsin archaeologist* for April, 1915, contains an article by William A. Titus on "Fond du Lac county antiquities." There is also a short study by Charles E. Brown on "Wisconsin Indian medals." The

leading article of the July number is "The lac Court Oreilles region" by the same author.

The second number of the *Minnesota history bulletin* presents a paper by Herbert A. Kellar on "The Minnesota state archives, their character, condition, and historical value." Three new departments initiated in this number of the bulletin — assigned to the publication of documents, to reviews of books, and to news and comment, respectively — make for a wider appeal to the historical profession. The biennial report of the Minnesota Historical Society for the years 1913 and 1914 appears as a supplement to this number.

The July issue of *The Iowa journal of history and politics* contains three interesting papers: A rather lengthy article on "The neutral ground," by Jacob Van der Zee, tells the story of Indian relations in the land acquired in the first government purchase from the Indians in the Iowa country, a strip of territory acquired by the treaty of 1830 with the object of putting an end to intertribal warfare in that region. There is another article on "The Black Hawk war and the treaty of 1832" by the same author. A study of "The grasshopper plagues in Iowa" by John E. Briggs shows the effect of that pest on western settlement and agriculture. A selection from the autobiography of John A. Nash is printed to show his connection with the early history of Des Moines College. The remainder of the number is devoted to the usual bibliographical data.

The chief contribution in the *Tennessee historical magazine* for June, 1915, is the conclusion of an article by Donald L. McMurray on "The Indian policy of the federal government and the economic development of the Southwest." The documents included in this number are the Mexican war letters of Colonel William B. Campbell of Tennessee to Governor David Campbell of Virginia.

Mr. Dunbar Rowland, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, is editing for publication a collection of the official letter books of William C. C. Claiborne, who, in the period from 1801 to 1816, served as governor of Mississippi territory, as commissioner of the United States to receive the province of Louisiana from the French government, as governor general of the province of Louisiana, as governor of the territory of Orleans, and as governor of the state of Louisiana. Much of the material, notably the group of letters dating from 1812 to 1816, has never before been used in historical research, and the editor considers that the new light which the collection throws on the important period with which it is concerned will modify very considerably

the views of the historians and students of westward expansion. Mr. Rowland is especially well fitted to edit the Claiborne letters in an adequate, scholarly way, a fact which of course will give the forthcoming publication enhanced value. The collection is to be printed, in six octavo volumes, by the Archives Publishing company of Jackson, Mississippi.

The leading article in the *Southwestern historical quarterly* for July, 1915, is the second part of a paper, "Texas versus White." This is really a political science discussion on the question of sovereignty, the location of sovereignty according to the opinion of the court given in this case in 1869, and wherein this differed from the opinions on the location of sovereignty previous to secession and the civil war. The other papers are on "Harris county, 1822-1845" and "Local government in the Spanish colonies." The documents published in this number consist of British letters concerning Texas and especially a memorial addressed by British subjects in Texas to Lord Aberdeen protesting against the annexation of that commonwealth by the United States.